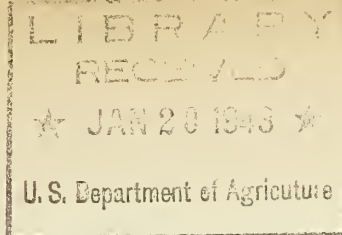


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R-77

CONSUMER TIME

Canned Soup

NETWORK: NBC

DATE: December 19, 1942

ORIGINATION: WRC

TIME: 12:15-12:30 P.M.-ET

Produced by Consumers' Counsel Division of the Department of Agriculture  
and presented in cooperation with United States Government  
agencies working for consumers.

oooOooo

1. SOUND: CASH REGISTER . . RINGS TWICE . . CLOSE DRAWER.

2. WOMAN: That's your money buying food.

3. SOUND: CASH REGISTER.

4. MAN: That's your money paying for a home.

5. SOUND: CASH REGISTER.

6. WOMAN: That's your money buying clothes.

7. MAN: Buying you a living in wartime.

8. SOUND: CASH REGISTER . . CLOSE DRAWER. PAUSE. THEN

FADE IN FITFUL TYPING. THREE SHARP RAPS ON DOOR.

OFF. TYPING SPEEDS UP NOISILY. MORE INSISTENT,

LOUDER RAPPING.



9. GUMPER: (OFF) Mr. Green! Open this door!

10. SOUND: TYPING STOPS.

11. JOE: (IN FEIGNED SURPRISE) Oh - Mrs. Gumper!

12. GUMPER: (MOCKING) Yes - oh Mrs. Gumper.

13. SOUND: KEY IN LOCK, ON MIKE. DOOR OPENS.

14. GUMPER: (FADING IN) You boys hard of hearing?

15. JOE: Steve's not here, and I was so busy working ---

16. GUMPER: Working! Humph!

17. JOE: I was. I'm typing a story.

18. GUMPER: Well, if I'd gotten as many stories turned  
back as you two - and owed as much rent -  
I'd junk this typewriter and go out and get  
a job.

19. JOE: Steve's gone out to get one now.

20. GUMPER: What kind of a job?

21. JOE: Well, he's gone to see an editor about a  
story ---

22. GUMPER: Uh-huh - same old story you've been telling  
me ever since I let you in here.

23. JOE: But Mrs. Gumper - this time ---



24. GUMPER: And another thing - I see you've still got that hotplate under the bed. If I catch you doing any more cooking in your room ---
25. JOE: (WITH IRONY) You won't - don't worry.
26. GUMPER: Well, until I get something besides promises out of you, I think I'll just take this typewriter along as security.
27. JOE: No! Mrs. Gumper ---
28. GUMPER: Might be able to get a few dollars for it at a pawnshop.
29. JOE: Please - wait ---!
30. STEVE: (OFF, SHOUTING EXCITEDLY) Joe! Hey - Joe!
31. JOE: (IN RELIEF) There's Steve now.
32. STEVE: (APPROACHING, SINGING) "Pennies from heaven...."
33. SOUND: STEPS APPROACHING, RUNNING UP STAIRS.
34. GUMPER: Sounds like he did get a job.
35. JOE: What did I tell you?
36. STEVE: (FADING IN) Hey, Joe ---! (THEN, COOLING IMMEDIATELY) Oh - Mrs. Gumper.
37. GUMPER: How was the editor?
38. STEVE: What editor?





39. GUMPER: What editor!
40. JOE: You know, Steve - the one who wanted to see you ---
41. STEVE: (RECOVERING) Oh - that one. He's fine. Wonderful!
42. JOE: That's good. Mrs. Gumper was a little worried ---
43. STEVE: All your worries are over, Mrs. Gumper. We're  
in the money.
44. GUMPER: Really?
45. STEVE: Really. You see before you two budding young  
authors - about to burst into bloom.
46. GUMPER: Well, I'll give you just one more day to burst,  
and then ---
47. STEVE: Then I've got a lot of work to do - for that editor.  
And - I'll need this typewriter ---
48. GUMPER: But ---
49. STEVE: Thank you, Mrs. Gumper. Good day.
50. SOUND: DOOR CLOSSES.
51. GUMPER: (THROUGH DOOR) One more day - do you hear?
52. STEVE: (CONFIDENTLY) Okay!
53. JOE: (SOTTO. EXCITED) Steve - did you really sell a  
story?
54. STEVE: Not exactly.



55. JOE: Oh. I thought you said we were in the money.
56. STEVE: We are. Look here.
57. JOE: A quarter! We eat!
58. STEVE: Hands off.
59. JOE: Where did you get it?
60. STEVE: Well, I got so tired of making the rounds of the magazine offices that I sat down on a step to rest. Had my hat in my lap. I must have dozed off, 'cause the next thing I knew I found this quarter in it.
61. JOE: Somebody thought you were a beggar!
62. STEVE: He wasn't far from wrong.
63. JOE: Gee - what'll we buy with it? How about a hamburger apiece and a cup of java?
64. STEVE: No, Joe - we got to spend this quarter carefully. Got to make it last as long as we can. Make it stretch.
65. JOE: (SARCASTICALLY) Then why don't you buy chewing gum?
66. STEVE: I'm going to buy a can of soup.
67. JOE: A can of soup - with a whole quarter?



68. STEVE: We'll buy the most soup we can for the least money, and save the rest. (TURNING OFF) Come on - let's go invest our fortune. Storekeepers - here we come!
69. SOUND: PAUSE, THEN ON CUE, FADE IN STORE SOUNDS. CASH RESIGER, OFF.
70. JOE: (TEARILY) Hey, Steve - how many stores we going into?
71. STEVE: Now, quit griping, Joe. We've got to compare prices if we want to get our money's worth. Why, that last store was charging as much as three cents more per can than the first place we went into.
72. JOE: Then why didn't you go back to the first one?
73. STEVE: I will - if this store's higher.
74. JOE: You'll be sorry. I'm going to have a dollar's worth of appetite by the time ---
75. GROCER: (FADING IN) Good morning, gentlemen. Can I help you?
76. STEVE: No, thanks. We're just looking.
77. GROCER: (PUZZLED) Huh? . . . . .
78. JOE: He's just looking. I'm starving.
79. STEVE: Joe - here's a can of Pine Tree vegetable soup for thirteen cents!



80. JOE: That's nothing. Here's a can of Smith's for twelve cents.
81. STEVE: But we wouldn't get as much soup from that can.
82. JOE: They look just the same size to me.
83. STEVE: Did you read the label?
84. JOE: What label?
85. STEVE: There - around the can. It tells how much soup is inside, and how to fix it, and so on.
86. GROCER: Do you two gentlemen keep house?
87. STEVE: We try to, but we won't be keeping it long - unless we pay our rent.
88. GROCER: "We won't be keeping it long..." (LAUGHS) That's good.
89. STEVE: I'm glad you think so.
90. JOE: Steve - this Smith label says eleven ounces. How much is in that can of Pine Tree soup?
91. STEVE: Eleven ounces.
92. JOE: You see? They're just the same size - and mine's cheaper.
93. STEVE: But you only add one can of water to yours. We can add two cans of water to Pine Tree soup.
94. JOE: So what?





95. STEVE: So we get more soup.
96. JOE: And it's thinner.
97. STEVE: It is not. Pine Tree brand is more concentrated to start with - so we can add more water without making it too thin.
98. JOE: Sounds funny to me.
99. STEVE: All right - ask the grocer.
100. GROCER: That's right - this Pine Tree brand is more concentrated. Not many shoppers know that, though. They don't all read the labels, like your friend here.
101. JOE: Oh, he's a regular little woman's home companion.
102. STEVE: Wish I were. I might get a few stories published.
103. JOE: Well, which can are we going to buy? Mine's a penny cheaper.
104. STEVE: No, it isn't, Joe - not if you figure the cost of the soup served.
105. JOE: How do you mean?
106. STEVE: Gee, you're as dumb as that cluck we wrote about. remember - the one ---
107. JOE: Never mind.



108. STEVE: Well, look - that Smith can will make twenty-two ounces of soup, won't it - when we get ready to eat it?
109. JOE: What do you mean "when"? I'm ready to eat it now.
110. STEVE: But this Pine Tree can will make thirty-three ounces. Half again as much soup - for only a penny more.
111. JOE: Gee, that's right!
112. STEVE: So by paying thirteen cents, we're really saving money. You see, thirty-three ounces of the Smith brand would cost ---
113. JOE: Okay, Einstein - okay. Let's take it and pay the grocer.
114. STEVE: Here's a quarter, sir.
115. JOE: Don't take any rubber quarters.
116. GROCER: Rubber!
117. STEVE: Joe just means I stretched it.
118. GROCER: Oh. (LAUGHS) That's good. Here's your change.
119. STEVE: Thanks.
120. JOE: (TURNING OFF) Come on- let's get home and cook this stuff - before I faint away.
121. SOUND: CASH REGISTER, FADING. STORE SOUNDS FADE. PAUSE  
DOOR, ON MIKE, OPENS SOFTLY, CLOSES.



122. STEVE: (SOTTO) Now be quiet - sneaking up the stairs. If that old buzzard ever catches us with this soup ---
123. JOE: She was squawking again this morning about cooking in our room.
124. STEVE: She was?
125. SOUND: CAN DROPS ON WOODEN STEPS, BOUNCES DOWN
126. STEVE: (SOTTO) Sh!
127. GUMPER: (OFF, CALLING) Mr. Green ----!
128. STEVE: Now you've done it.
129. JOE: The can just clipped out of my hand.
130. GUMPER: (FADING IN, SWEETLY) I want to apologize to you boys for all the things I've said about your story writing.
131. JOE: Huh?
132. GUMPER: Yes - I realize how how wrong I was, and --- Oh, here - you dropped something - a can of vegetable soup.
133. STEVE: Thanks .... We - uh - we just thought it would be a good thing to have on hand.
134. GUMPER: Well, any time you want to cook it - you just go right ahead.
135. JOE: Huh?



136. GUMPER: I want you boys to feel at home here.
137. JOE: Say, what in ---?
138. STEVE: (CUTTING IN. TURNING OFF) Well, thanks, Mrs. Gumper. C'mon, Joe ---
139. GUMPER: Oh, just a minute - I nearly forgot. Here's a telegram for you.
140. STEVE: A telegram!
141. GUMPER: I hope you won't mind my opening it. I thought it might be important.
142. STEVE: (COMING ON MIKE) Let's see ---
143. SOUND: TELEGRAM OPENED, NO TEARING.
144. JOE: What's it say?
145. STEVE: Joe - we are in the money!
146. JOE: Huh?
147. STEVE: The Weekly Reader has bought one of our stories - for a hundred dollars!
148. JOE: A hundred dollars!
149. GUMPER: I think it's just wonderful.
150. JOE: Gee - then we can buy any kind of food we want! We won't have to watch prices - or figure by ounces ---





151. STEVE: Uh-uh - that's where you're wrong.
152. JOE: Huh?
153. STEVE: We're going to make that hundred bucks stretch just as far as we can. That's how people go places in this world. Even authors.
154. GUMPER: Before you two go any place, you'd better pay your rent.
155. JOE: Aw, gee .... What's the good of being a budding author, if you can't celebrate?
156. STEVE: We'll celebrate all right. Come on, Bud. We'll drink a toast with thirty-three ounces of vegetable soup - bought with pennies from heaven!
- (PAUSE)
157. JOHN: (ON CUE) And now - the rest of you soup consumers - we hope you aren't down to your last quarter . But - whether you are or not - your Consumers' Counsel wants to help you get your share of these extra pennies. Maybe even dollars.
158. FREYMAN: Really, Johnny? Does it make that much difference to read the labels on the cans?
159. JOHN: It makes a whale of a difference, Mrs. Freyman. Why, if you just ate one cup of canned vegetable soup each week for a year, you might save as much as a dollar and seventy-nine cents - just by watching the labels and price ceilings.



160. FREYMAN: A dollar seventy-nine! I never knew that canned soups varied so much in price.
161. JOHN: They may vary more in other parts of the country. We made our survey here in Washington, D. C.
162. FREYMAN: How did you go about it?
163. JOHN: Just went around to various stores and compared the prices and the labels.
164. FREYMAN: What got you started on soups?
165. JOHN: We wanted to find if the new soups they're selling cost more. There's a new ruling, you know, by the War Production Board - that all soups must be concentrated, now.
166. FREYMAN: Why do they have to be concentrated, Johnny?
167. JOHN: To save tin. There's no sense in canning a lot of water, you know.
168. FREYMAN: I guess not.
169. JOHN: So the Government told soup canners they had to make concentrated soups, or they couldn't get tin cans for canning.
170. FREYMAN: So then the stores raised their prices on the new concentrated soups.
171. JOHN: Yes, OPA let the canners and the stores raise their prices.



172. FREYMAN: How much?
173. JOHN: Well, the Office of Price Administration worked out a system. It's too complicated to explain here. But what surprised us, when we went shopping, was to see how much more some stores raised their prices than others. One brand of the new concentrated vegetable beef soup we looked at jumped up two cents in one store - four in another - and six cents in a third.
174. FREYMAN: The same soup?
175. JOHN: Same soup - same size can - but different stores.
176. FREYMAN: Goodness, Johnny! Guess I'd better compare prices.
177. JOHN: You may find some surprises if you do.
178. FREYMAN: But Johnny - aren't there ceiling prices on canned soups?
179. JOHN: You bet there are. There were ceiling prices for the old style soups. And now the new concentrated soups have new ceiling prices.
180. FREYMAN: But these ceiling prices are different in each store. Isn't that true?
181. JOHN: Yes, that's right.
182. FREYMAN: The soups you found, was their selling price always the same as their ceiling price?



183. JOHN: Most times, but not always.
184. FREYMAN: I don't suppose any store would do this, but did you find any stores that sold the old style soups at the new style ceiling prices?
185. JOHN: We didn't find any stores doing that. But we know one consumer here in Washington . . . just the other day she found a store doing that.
186. FREYMAN: That doesn't sound fair to me.
187. JOHN: It isn't fair. It isn't legal, either. This consumer could have gone to court about that, and the judge would undoubtedly have made the store pay her \$50 for overcharging. Instead, she spoke to the manager. Quick as a flash, he changed the price back to the old ceiling price.
188. FREYMAN: But Johnny, how can you tell whether a can of soup is the new kind or the old kind?
189. JOHN: By the label. The Government told canners they could charge more only for soups that are clearly labeled to show they are the new kind.
190. FREYMAN: And then you can figure out just how much each soup will cost to serve - the way Steve figured it, in the story.





191. JOHN: That's right - and that's very important to your pocketbook. The cost of a can of soup as it stands on a shelf may be very different from its cost in a soupbowl, ready to eat.
192. FREYMAN: You mean - figuring it the way Steve and Joe did. The soup they bought - when it was diluted two times - was actually cheaper per cup than the soup in the less expensive can which could only be diluted once.
193. JOHN: That's the idea. You'll have to do a little arithmetic ---
194. FREYMAN: It's worth it - if I can stretch my pennies and dollars.
195. JOHN: Righto. And your Consumers' Counsel, Don Montgomery, hopes that you'll stretch every one of your pennies and dollars. Don't you, Mr. Montgomery?
196. MONTGOMERY: Indeed I do. That's our job - to help consumers buy the best possible living with the money they have.
197. FREYMAN: Well, you've certainly done me a favor today - giving me all these tips about soup.



198. MONTGOMERY:

Well - on the face of it - canned soup may sound like a rather unimportant subject for a whole radio program, but I thought that by broadcasting all these facts about that one little item on your food budgets we could give you some idea of all the digging you'll have to do in order to save money.

For instance, one brand of soup - Johnny mentioned it - jumped two cents a can in some stores and as much as six cents in others. Now, unless you yourself did some shopping around to dig out the facts - you wouldn't have known that, would you?

199. FREYMAN:

No.

200. MONTGOMERY:

Nor the fact that one can of soup selling for eight cents really costs you more than another brand selling for 9 cents. Because - you add two cans of water or milk to the nine cent can, but only one to the eight cent can. So actually the nine cent can gives you fifty percent more soup.

Now, this brand of soup that needs two cans of water added used to require just one can of water - before the Government order on concentration came out. The cans now are just the same size as they were before, but the contents are so concentrated that they make more soup. And so - although the

(MORE)



price per can has gone from seven to nine cents - that brand of soup is really cheaper per cup today than before its new formula.

Now, of course, I can't tell you anything about the quality of any of these soups. We haven't investigated that. You'll just have to try them yourselves - and see which ones you think are best. You see, the OPA order requires that every single can of soup now shall contain a certain minimum amount of solids. But to get that minimum, a tomato soup manufacturer - for instance, might add more tomatoes, or he might just add flour. You'll have to try these new formulas and decide that for yourselves.

201. FREYMAN: Wish you could help us out with it, Mr. Montgomery.

202. MONTGOMERY: Wish I could too, but I think I'll have to limit my surveys just to the cost of these soups... And you can help me out with that - if you will.

203. FREYMAN: How?

204. MONTGOMERY: By sending me the labels off the cans of soup you buy - with the price you paid scribbled on the back.

205. FREYMAN: Sure - I'll do that. I'll send you some the next time I buy soup.



206. MONTGOMERY: Well, I'd rather you held onto them for a while and send them after the first of the year. Christmas time, you know, the mails are overloaded.
207. FREYMAN: Oh, that's right. And - is there anything else you want us to write on the back of them - beside the price per can?
208. MONTGOMERY: I'd like you to write down what you paid for the soup - such as eight cents for one can or two for twenty-five cents or whatever it is. And then - the usual information we ask you for --
209. FREYMAN: Our own name and address, and the call letters of our radio station. And - we send the labels to the Consumers' Counsel - Department of Agriculture - Washington, D. C.
210. MONTGOMERY: That's the place.
211. ANNOUNCER: Did you get that address? Consumers' Counsel - Department of Agriculture - Washington, D. C. Just remove the label from any can of soup you buy, and write the following facts on the back of it: How much you paid for that can - the ceiling price for it, as posted in that store - the name and location of the store - your own name and address, and the call letters of your radio station.
- And for next week's Consumer Time . . . .





212. JOHN: A special Christmas program. The dramatic story of a family who chose between getting and giving, and what happened to them on Christmas Eve.

213. ANNOUNCER: So be sure to be with us for this next broadcast of the Consumers' Counsel in the Department of Agriculture - presented in cooperation with other Government agencies working for consumers.

Today's script by Jane Ashman.

CONSUMER TIME is a public service of NBC and has come to you from Washington.

This is the National Broadcasting Company.

